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# INDEXA

Spring 2012

[www.indexa.org](http://www.indexa.org)

Special Issue

A non-profit organization for the enhancement of amateur radio, worldwide peace, and friendship

## ***Sable Island (CY0)—FINALLY (March 2011)***

***By Randy Rowe, N0TG***

**S**able Island -FINALLY, seems to be an appropriate title for this DXpedition. For those that may not have followed the operation since the first announcement, this was the team's third try. The initial discussion of going on a DXpedition began in late 2008 between long time friends AA4VK, WA4DAN, and me—N0TG. The

three of us, with others, experienced DXpeditions together to Navassa

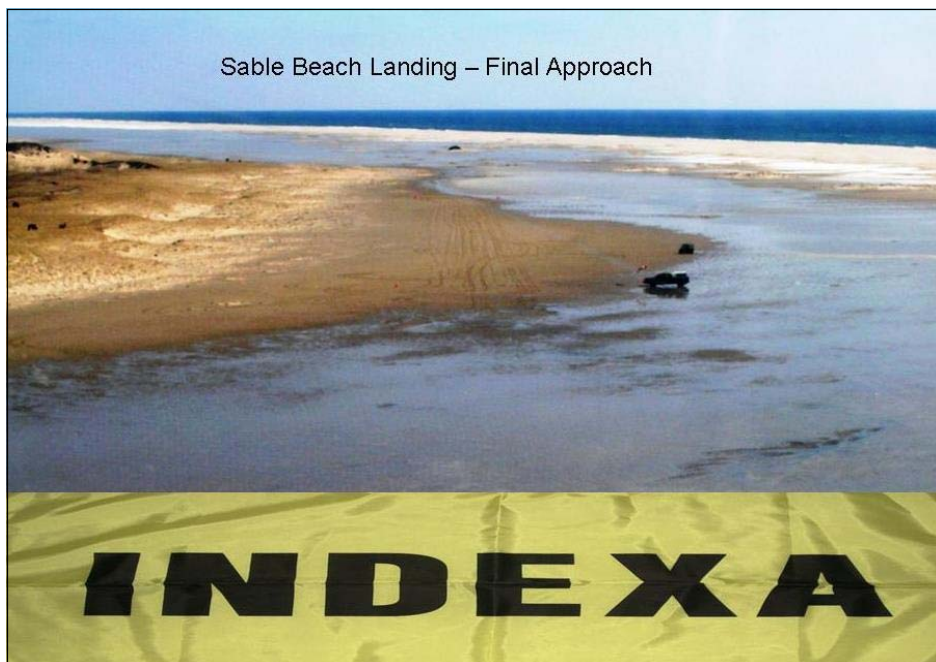
Island and Desecheo during 1992 and a few non-rare places as well, and have stayed in touch ever since.

### **DELAYS**

Murray, WA4DAN had been to Sable in 1996 and was well aware of the logistic issues and unique challenges of planning this DXpedition. We began planning in 2008 and early 2009 we announced our intention to put on an operation in late September. However, soon after that announcement, there was a serious health matter in my immediate family and the team decided to hold off and consider rescheduling later. After a few months the health matter was successfully resolved and we announced the operation was rescheduled for October 2009.

Jumping ahead without going into a lot of detail, the team flew to Halifax, our take-off point, in October 2009 and was turned back after several days due to unexpected extensive aircraft problems. Then, again in December, 2009, we traveled to Halifax once again for an early December operation, and again, due to violent

*(Continued on page 2)*



**inside...**

***Andaman Islands (VU4PB) March 2011***

***Cameroon (TJ9PF) by F6KOP Team (February 2011)***

***Ron Wright (ZL1AMO), INDEXA Past President, now a Silent Key***

## Sable Island (CY0)—FINALLY (Con'd)

(Continued from page 1)

storms and long term adverse weather forecasts, we returned home. Again, we re-grouped with lots of consultation as to the best odds of getting onto Sable and chose early March 2011 as our next effort. Even though we experienced the discouragement of delay, we were not going to give up. We stayed determined to assure that this DXpedition was going to happen. Finally, we successfully landed on Sable on 5 March 2011 and the operation continued until departure on 14 March.

### LOGISTICS SUPPORT

Early on, the Halifax Amateur Radio Club offered to assist us when we traveled to Halifax—the take-off point for flying to Sable. To help us meet our planning and day-to-day needs, Scott (VE1QD)—representing HARC—assigned Gary (VE1RGB) as our go-to guy. What a wonderful friendship has developed. Gary, a retired engineer, attended to every detail we requested and more. Gary built the coax cables, received and stored equipment/materials we shipped and guided us with the many other needs. Others in the club were involved behind the scenes as well, and without these fine folks, I am not sure how we could have managed. Our team appreciates Gary and HARC's encouragement more than we can express.

### THE TEAM

As the DXpedition was delayed several times, it became difficult to hold the same team together over time. Business and personal matters for team members resulted in a turn over of the team. The final makeup was: N0TG - Randy, K8LEE - Wayne, and N1SNB - Jeff. All of the fellows that were once

planning to go contributed greatly to the final success, however. Their contributions in planning, providing funds, hardware, and encouragement were the foundation of our activation of Sable Island. Thanks to WA4DAN, AA4VK (original organizers), AI5P, and VE1RGB, all of whom were at one time or another scheduled to make the trip.

This was a small team operation by necessity, driven by the only aircraft available and currently approved for flights to Sable, the Britten-Norman Islander, BN2. We were constrained to a total weight limit of 1400 pounds. That limit is all inclusive, i.e., body weight, equipment, antennas, tools, food, luggage and personal items—everything. The weight adds up quickly and in fact we were 150 pounds over during weigh-in. Before takeoff we had to decide which items to leave behind.

### PERMITS

Two permits are required to access Sable Island. Acquiring these was straight-forward. Permission to access Sable was formally granted by the Canadian Coast Guard. In addition, visiting Sable must also be approved and scheduled by the Officer-In-Charge stationed on Sable. We cannot express fully our appreciation for the cooperation and manner in which these folks worked with us and the multiple reschedules due to delays. A very special thank you is extended by our team to the Canadian Coast Guard, and the Sable Island Officer-in-Charge, Gerry Forbes and also to Al Wilson on Sable Island on a three month rotation with Mr. Forbes.

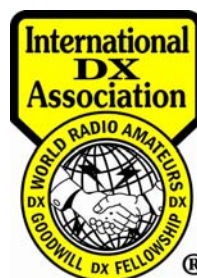
(Continued on page 3)



**People, equipment, luggage and food supplies had to be less than 1400 pounds!**

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#### Editor & Publisher

John Scott, K8YC; 16212 Walcot Lane  
Cornelius, NC 28031 USA  
jascott@mi-connection.com

#### Distribution & Circulation

Bill Jennings, W4UNP; P. O. Box 123  
Catawba, SC 29704 USA  
w4unp@comporium.net

Send change-of-address information and membership applications to Secretary-Treasurer, Bill Jennings, W4UNP.

Address general correspondence to President Gary Dixon, K4MQG, at  
gdixon@comporium.net.



## Sable Island (CY0)—FINALLY (Con'd)

(Continued from page 2)

### ANTENNAS AND EQUIPMENT

Antennas were vertical dipole GAP Monobanders, one for each band 40m through 10m. Eighty meters and 160m were served by inverted "V" dipoles with the center height at 38 feet. Also, we had a ladder fed dipole cut for 80m used on all bands, designed and fabricated for the DXpedition by VE1RGB. We had hoped for higher performance antennas for the low bands, but weight and logistic matters became issues. Dealing with setting up the antennas on Sable was a challenge due to the wind and cold temperatures. For this "Texas" resident, I considered the weather "brutally cold" and difficult. My fellow



A modicum of sunlight filters through the damp, cold March atmosphere providing little warmth. Below, the author saves his raspy voice by using CW. (See text.)



teammates from Indiana and Massachusetts seem to take the weather much better than I. Each antenna performed quite well. Radio equipment consisted of three 100 watt transceivers with amplifiers for each radio.



Above, Wayne (K8LEE) pounds out Qs in relative comfort. Below, Jeff, N1NSB, gives RTTY operators a "new one" in their favorite mode.



### OPERATION

The pileups were quite large and never let up. A three man team with more than three bands open most of the time, created quite a challenge to satisfy the demand. We tried the best we could to work all the bands. We did give priority to the 12 and 10 meter bands when they were open. Shown below is the summary by band and mode for the 24,117 contacts logged. We intended to operate more SSB than logged, but several days into the operation

(Continued on page 4)

## Sable Island (CY0)—FINALLY (Con'd)

(Continued from page 3)

Wayne and I developed severe colds and we absolutely could not use our voices.

It was frustrating at times to know that many desired us to be on a particular band/mode at specific times. We simply could not be everywhere and tried our best to balance the operation. For the week we were there, we each operated over 100 hours. There was little time for sleep or being away from the radio. The operation quickly turned into "work". However, we are all thrilled to have had the opportunity to visit Sable and thankful to the many that encouraged us and also for those who assisted financially.

THANK YOU "INDEXA" for generously supporting the DXpedition. The financial support was very helpful. Additionally, having the INDEXA name behind us was an encouragement and kept us upbeat and determined. Thank you!

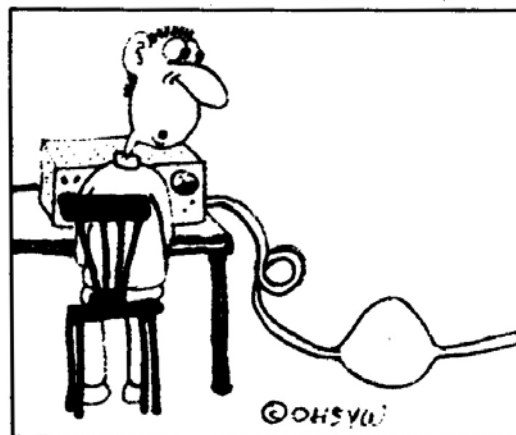
—73, *Randy*



"We will experience some weather delays" takes on a whole new meaning for pilots and passengers alike when the "runway" is an oceanside beach. Compare this with the beach photo on Page 1. No flying on this day!

### SABLE ISLAND CONTACT STATISTICS

<u>BAND</u>	<u>CW</u>	<u>SSB</u>	<u>RTTY</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>
10	543	89		632
12	1598	247		1845
15	1838	680		2518
17	3394	539		3933
20	3871	1488		5359
30	2659			2659
40	2619	450		3069
80	1519	54		1573
160	1826			1826
RTTY			703	703
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>19867</b>	<b>3547</b>	<b>703</b>	<b>24,117</b>



*Yes, there could be something wrong in my antenna...*

*Reprinted with Permission*



## Andaman Islands—VU4PB (March 2011)

By The DXpedition Team

The Andaman Islands—a name that conjures up an exotic image. Numerous islands spread out reaching almost up to Indonesia. Stories of inaccessible islands populated by fierce native tribes who killed anyone who dared approach the island and a penal settlement, all make it an exotic location.

VU4 has always been a much sought entity for DXers worldwide and it was no different this year.

The planning for this expedition started in early 2010 when an application was submitted to the various authorities for permission to operate four stations in August



2010. With various events worldwide and with its strategic location it is not easy to obtain permissions to work a DXpedition as it has to be cleared by the military and civil authorities both in Port Blair and on the mainland. These take considerable time, and unfortunately the permissions did not come through in time and the planned dates for the event had to be postponed. After a lot of follow up, permission to operate in March 2011 was obtained. Yet the permission came only in January, and all arrangements had to be done in a very short time—air bookings, room reservations, planning for sea-freight of the heavy equipment, locating the stations, etc. A quick three day trip to Port Blair was made and most of the arrangements firmed up.

As all equipment were owned by individual operators, arrangements had to be made to collect, pack and send out the heavy stuff like push up masts, antennas, linear amplifiers etc. Two Spider beams and spider poles had been ordered by two of our operators but unfortunately arrived in Chennai a bit late for the initial sea shipment and could only go later and thereby arrived four days after we started operations. The initial team of eleven operators flew out on the 11<sup>th</sup> March 2011. Three members of the original team could not make it due to health issues. Thus, we started with a reduced team.

As arrangements for setting up the antennas were

underway, the weather changed and we had gale force winds and very, very heavy rain making it impossible to work. This went on for almost four days and so we had to finally work in the rain to meet the deadline to start operations at 0001 IST on the 15<sup>th</sup> March. Two stations went on the air as scheduled and the others came on line over the next two days by working during breaks in the horrible weather.

One station had a 3-element SteppIR on the roof of Sinclair Hotel, the second at Megapode Nest Hotel a C3S tribander and the third a SteppIR vertical located at Megapode Camping Resort. One Spider Beam was set up at the Camping resort after it arrived making it the fourth station.

For the low bands, slopers from the room to the sea at Sinclair's and dipoles on coconut trees at the camping site were used.

After five days three members of the initial team had to return home, leaving the rest to work the stations. Two more operators joined us after two days and another three a few days later, but in the meantime two of the original team had to return to the mainland due to work commitments.

On the 21<sup>st</sup> VU2VKU arrived, having traveled all the way from the USA, just to be a part of the team. He brought with him a 2-element SteppIR with 40M,

*(Continued on page 6)*

## Andaman Islands—VU4PB (Con'd)

(Continued from page 5)

and radios and amplifiers. Thus, a fifth station was set up with that equipment and for a few days till he had to return to the USA. That gave us five stations on the air simultaneously.

On the 24<sup>th</sup> three ops arrived while some had to return. The team was therefore a floating number with not more than eight operators onsite at any one time. Making an operating schedule to keep all stations manned and to provide periodic rest for operators was a real chore.

Propagation predictions had been worked out by VU2PTT and VU2VKU and proved more or less accurate and so we were able to work the openings quite well on all bands.

We then discovered that there was significant pirate activity and so many hams worldwide had the misfortune of working those unscrupulous individuals whose life ambition seems to be to spoil the efforts of others. That resulted in many online log search queries from those who thought they had worked a VU4PB station but had actually worked a SL1M operator.

Logs were uploaded to the webpage daily and the online log search was effective in helping the “deserving” to confirm they had worked us, rather than a slim.

We had set up a voting system on our webpage to see which bands and modes were of interest and we tried as much as possible to concentrate on what was needed by the majority. Analysis was made almost daily to see how things were progressing and changes were made to operator schedules to try and fill in gaps of bands and modes. In the two weeks of operation a total of 33,000 QSO's were logged and the QSL process will be complete by the time this is published.

We are very grateful to all our sponsors who contributed towards our effort. Donations via Pay Pal were instantly and automatically acknowledged on our webpage. Major sponsor's logos also appeared on the webpage and where possible on the QSL card. We specifically thank **INDEXA** for the support provided for our effort.

—*The VU4PB Team*

## Cameroon (TJ7PF) Comes to Life

By Sebastien Poulenard, F5UFX for the F6KOP Team

For more than 10 years F6KOP team has organized one DXpedition per year: 5V7C, TO7C (FY), 5H1C, XT2C, J5C, TK7C, TS7C, TM7CC, IS0R ...

In 2010 we had to cancel a “most wanted” trip at the last minute due to a transportation problem. We were very disappointed as everything



was ready. But, we did not regret TM7CC from Ouessant Island and IS0R from Sardinia Island.

So for 2011 we planned again to go somewhere in Africa. Choosing the correct destination is not easy, it should be a compromise between a country on the most wanted list, security, price, and many other param-

(Continued on page 7)



## Cameroon (TJ7PF) Comes to Life (Con'd)

(Continued from page 6)

ters.

Most of our team were ready to go back to Togo, 5V, but our Italian friends led by I2YSB announced their operation as 5V7TT in October 2010, so again we had to organize an alternative choice in a very short time.

Very quickly, after a discussion with Didier F5OGL, we decided to go to Cameroon (TJ) as there hadn't been any "serious" activity for several years. Cameroon is number 67 for Club Log's most wanted list and number 96 for DX Magazine's list..

Then our operating location was found, the license requested, and after a few emails the team was fully composed in less than a week.

Thanks to our very effective team leader, Franck F4AJQ, everything was ready on time.

The team members are : F4AJQ Frank, F5UFX Seb, FM5CD Michel, N6OX Bob, N2WB Wild Bill, K4SV Dave, ON7RN Eric, I2VGW Gabriele, F8BJI Jean Paul, F6ENO Alain, F6BIV Jean-Luc, F5EOT Michel, F5VHQ John, DJ7JC Norbert, F1NGP Yann, F5PED Mathieu, and F2JD Gerard.

Unfortunately some friends were not able to come with us: F9IE on holidays in VK, F6AXX in S7, F2VX who had an accident just two days before departure, F1HRE, F4EGD and F5CWU had work commitments.

Thanks to the hard work of F6KOP team, all equipment was ready on time: 5 stations (the 6<sup>th</sup> is Dave's K3), all computers with Wintest logging software, all antennas and countless miscellaneous items.

As our goal was to make a maximum of QSOs on low bands, our friend F6AOJ did a great job by adding a receive antenna input on our YAESU FT-450 and preparing all beverages and a K9AY antenna.

In the same time, Mat F5PED had just finished his 30m Four Square, and John F5VQH our VDA antennas.

Bob, Dave and Bill arrived a few days before in Geneva airport, and finally all the team met in Paris on February 10<sup>th</sup>.

After last phonecalls with our families and our pilot, F6AMI we boarded the plane; 6 hours later we arrived in TJ land. Our first feel was "Whoa, it is too hot!".

We went through the customs and started to store all our luggage in the small bus. It was nearly full with



**Team members gather in Paris from many points before departing for Cameroon.**

only our equipment, but 17 operators needed to find a place in the bus as well. The two hour trip to Kribi appeared very long for all the team since we all had to sit on luggage for the journey.

The hotel was close to the sea, so the location was fine, but we would have hoped for more space for antennas on the beach.

Anyway, in about half a day all antennas were almost ready and we began operations with 4 stations in the afternoon of February 11. Yann F1NGP was in charge of computing system, Jean Paul F8BJI installed all stations while the rest of the team worked outside installing antennas.

Pileups were immediately huge with very strong signals coming from all around the world. The last 2 stations were set up later in the night.

During the whole DXpedition operations were often hindered by electrical power problems. The backup generator was working fine but wasn't big enough to support all amplifiers at the same time when there was a power failure.

On the 4th day, thanks to the sun, SFI was up to more than 100, giving us very nice openings on high bands. We added a few vertical dipoles on the beach so we could operate with all stations on high bands during daylight. On the other hand low bands were very difficult during night time.

(Continued on page 8)

## Cameroon (TJ7PF) Comes to Life (Con'd)

We kept working every day on improving the receiving systems for low bands. We had many beverages (up to 200m and more), but we had to replace some of them a few times because the wire disappeared...



**All stations are fully manned and the pileups are very large.**

Day after day we prepared statistics and conferred with our pilot station, F6AML, to consider all comments that could help. We tried to give attention to all parts of the world.

The internet connection was very slow. This made it hard and time consuming to upload our logs with regularity. Those trying to work any DXpedition in recent years have come to depend on the satisfaction of knowing they are in the log.

During the whole DXpedition the team was in a very good spirits. Everybody worked hard, was right on time for radio shifts, etc. It is the result of many years of work from all F6KOP team members.

With only two days remaining in our scheduled stay we were now far from the digital mode QSO number world record of ZL8X (previously the record belonged to us while at TS7C). So we decided to use 3 stations for RTTY, one for SSB, one for CW and one as a flex station.. Everybody was very motivated!

During our stay we were visited by ON4COX, who now lives in Kribi, and by Lionel TJ3SL. The official police also came to our location and checked all our authorizations and licenses—of course, everything was OK. We also were interviewed by two different national television stations as a news item.

We stopped transmitting on February 20<sup>th</sup> around 1 pm, packed back all equipments, and went back to Douala airport.

In Paris we were welcomed home by our friends F6AOJ, F1HRE, F0EBS, and F5IOW. After a last coffee all together, everyone went back home.

We did not reach our goal of 80,000 Qs due to various power issues and difficult operating conditions on the low bands. Yet, we felt our 68,000 QSOs was a satisfactory score in 9 days. We were very proud to reclaim the RTTY world record for contacts by a DXpedition.

We would like to thank all F6KOP team members who helped in France before, during and after the DXpedition. We'd like to recognize also:

Mme. Bachelet for her great help with attaining our license.

M. Nken and all the hotel Costa Blanca crew

The Le général de brigade Bernard Commins, chef de bataillon Patrice Dange, and the adjutant-chef Denis Bertrand

All Cameroon customs crew

M. Kamgam and M. Loumou from the ART in Yaounde

Our QSL manager Didier, F5OGL

Maurice F5NQL for all communications

F6AML our pilot station

F4TTR our webmaster

Micheline YL-F9IE for the QSL design

F0EBS and F5IWO for their help with logistics in Paris airport

Thanks to all our sponsors

F6KOP, LA VILLE DE PROVINS, SPIDERBEAM, MDXC, INDEXA, CDXC (Clipperton DX), UFT, SWODXA, GMDXF GROUP, EUDXF, GDXF, CDXC (Chiltern DX), LONE STAR DX ASSOCIATION, NIP-PON DX NANCHATE, RFHAM, RBLOB RADIO GROUP, RADIO33, CLUB LOG, REF ED 94, L'AGENCE PARTIR, WIN-TEST, TOP BAND DX Club, REF ED 77

Also big thanks to all individual sponsors

Thank you all for your confidence, we are already working on the next project, see you in the pileup.

—73 *Seb*, F5UFX, for the team



## Silent Key - Tribute to ZL1AMO, Ron Wright

By Bernie McClenny, W3UR

(Reprinted with permission)

It is with great sadness that I report the passing of the legendary DXpeditioner ZL1AMO, Ron Wright earlier today, March 6, 2012. He was 75. Ron was admitted to North Shore Hospital last week after he had a collapsed lung and was in stable condition at the time. He became a Silent Key earlier today.

My first QSO with Mr. Wright was ZL3HI/C in 1978 in the 10 meter Novice Band and as corny as it might sound he would later become one of my DX heroes. Ron was a serious CW op and would visit the US Novice bands late in his DXpeditions. He had probably well over 100 DXpeditions throughout the Pacific including 3D2RW, 3D2RW/R, 5W1CW, A35EA, C21/ZL1AMO, FW0BX, H44RW, T28RW, T28RW, T30BH, VR6HI, YJ0RW, ZK1CQ (South), ZK1CQ, (North), ZK1MB (North), ZK2RW, ZK3RW, ZL7AMO, ZL8AMO and ZL9AMO just to name a few! Many of these locations he visited multiple times between the late 70's and 2002.

Some will remember his last DXpedition where he was emergently air lifted back home to New Zealand from Fiji back in late 2002. After his recovery he went back home and continued to give back to the hobby as QSL manager for his good friend ZL3CW, Jacky Calvo. For many years he was also a BOD member of INDEXA and a member of the A1 Club. Ron was the 23rd Amateur Radio operator inducted into the CQ DX Hall of Fame in 1985, as well as recently (2009) the "2nd inductee to the NZ DX Hall of Fame".

AMO was one of the best CW ops and operated most of his DXpeditions exclusively on his favorite mode. His CW DXCC count was 339/346 (current/total), only needing one country to have them all on Code! That one missing ironically was 3C0 - Annonbon!

I had the pleasure of meeting Ron as a young man in the early 80's (<http://www.dailydx.com/images/ZL1AMO-WB3JRU.jpg>) at a National Capitol DX Association (NCDXA) meeting in Virginia. Throughout the years we had many QSOs on CW. One evening I found AMO at home on SSB on 20 meters. Knowing Ron always enjoyed life and had a great sense of humor, I broke in and said "Hello Mr. Wright, you're on the wrong mode". His quick witted response was "I guess you can call me Mr. Wrong!" So from that point on when I found him on SSB during his DXpeditions I would give him reports of "59 Mr. Wrong!" In all seriousness I wish the Wright family (his wife Jeanette and daughters Karen and Terri) my sincere condolences. Amateur Radio and the DXing Community have lost an extraordinary man and DXpeditioner!

*(Ron Wright served as interim President of INDEXA in the 2005-6 year and was elected President by the membership for the 2006-7 year. Many long-time DXers filled out their DXCC lists for South Pacific entities because of Ron's many DXpeditions to Pacific Isles. He was a dedicated DXer.—The Editor)*

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